(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (e) The matter is under consideration of the Government.

Subjects transferred to Panchayats

t2976. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that under 73rd and 74th amendments of the Constitution, 23 main subjects were to be transferred to the Panchayats;

(b) if so, the names of the States in which these subjects have been transferred; and

(c) the steps being taken by Central Government to get these subjects transferred to Panchayats in the States where the same have not been transferred as yet?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Article 243G of the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 provides that the State Legislature may devolve powers and responsibilities upon Panchayats with respect to the implementation of Schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them including those in relation to the matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule. This Schedule lists 29 matters.

(b) and (c) As the Constitution provides that it is legislatures of States that will endow the Panchayati Raj Institutions with powers and authority, all the States covered by the 73rd Amendment Act, have devolved matters to them in varying measure. Effective devolution of functions would need to be accompanied by devolution of funds and functionaries to the Panchayati Raj Institutions in order to empower them to function as institutions of self government in accordance with the Constitutional mandate. In order to evolve a national consensus on the measures to be taken to strengthen Panchayati Raj and ensure that Panchayati Raj Institutions function as institutions of self-government as envisaged in Part IX of the Constitution, the Ministry of Panchayati

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Raj convened Seven Round Tables of State Ministers of Panchayati Raj between July, 2004 and December, 2004. At the Round Tables, about 150 points for action, covering 18 dimensions of Panchayati Raj, were formulated by consensus, *inter-alia,* these cover points of action pertaining to both the Centre and the States, relating to the effective devolution of functions, funds and functionaries to Panchayats. At the Kolkata Round Table, it was agreed that while devolution must eventually comprise the entire range of subjects provided for in the State legislation in a time-bound manner, States may prioritize their devolution programme to ensure that for such functions as are prioritized, there is full and effective devolution in empowering PRIs as institutions of self-government in respect of these functions. To this end, the first step is identification of activities related to devolved functions for each tier of Panchayati Raj Institutions within a time-bound period. The next step should be the devolution of functionaries to the Panchayati Raj Institutions on the basis of the activities to be performed at each tier. The final step which would complete the cycle of devolution wlould consist in the devolution of finances commensurate with the activities to be performed at each level of the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

A Council of State Ministers of Panchayati Raj under the Chairmanship of the Union Minister for Panchayati Raj has been constituted to review the implementation of the recommendations. The first meeting of the Council was held on 5th-6th August, 2005 at Kochi, Kerala. A Committee of Chief Secretaries of States and State Panchayati Raj Secretaries has also been constituted under the Chairmanship of the Union Secretary (Panchayati Raj) to monitor the progress on the implementation of the 150 recommendations of the Seven Round Tables and the decisions of the Council of State Ministers of Panchayati Raj. Four review meetings of the Committee have so far been held in April, 2005, June, 2005, September, 2005, and November 2005.

With a view to interacting with Panchayats and carrying out a review with the authorities concerned of the progress in implementing the points for action mutually agreed to in the Round Tables, a process of visiting the States and UTs at the level of Union Minister for Panchayati Raj has been initiated. Eight States have been covered so far. These include Karnataka, West Bengal, Uttaranchal, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Arunachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. Each visit is

concluded with a Statement of Conclusions jointly signed with the Chief Minister of the State concerned, laying out the points of action on which the State would move to operationalise the recommendations of the Round Tables.

Grants from foreign countries for Panchayats

2977. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has any plan to seek grants from foreign countries for the development of Panchayats; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) As at present, no such plans have been finalized.

Establishment of rural business hubs

†2978. SHRI SURENDRA LATH:
SHRIKRIPAL PARMAR:
SHRI R.S. GAVAI:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared an action plan to establish rural business hubs;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the names of States identified for developing rural business hubs;

(d) whether States will be provided financial assistance for establishing; rural business hubs;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) by when these hubs are likely to be establish?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj and

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.